



News Release

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Ellen Mattila
ITD Communication
208-832-8776
ellen.mattila@itd.idaho.gov

ITD reminds drivers to put down the distractions and drive engaged

BOISE— April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is urging drivers to put down the distractions and drive engaged this month and every month. The Idaho Office of Highway Safety (OHS) is teaming up with local law enforcement across the state to stop distracted driving. Now through April 19, more officers will be on the roads looking to educate distracted drivers and remind them that Idaho is a hands-free state. It is illegal to operate a hand-held communication device while operating a vehicle, even while stopped in traffic.

“OHS’s mission is for everyone to drive engaged. Engaged driving is the opposite of distracted driving. It’s being present behind the wheel so you can react safely to whatever comes your way while driving,” said OHS Program Manager Josephine Middleton. “It’s the safety standard we all should commit to whenever we start our cars.”

Distractions are a significant danger to drivers in Idaho. In 2021, distracted driving played a role in 5,035 crashes, and 11% of all fatal crashes involved some form of distracted driving. Distractions are broken up into three broad categories: visual (taking eyes off the road), manual (taking hands off the wheel), and cognitive (taking your mind off the road).

Examples of distractions while driving:

- Using a phone
- Setting a new course in a GPS
- Frequent/extended fiddling with the radio or climate controls
- Passengers, children, or pets distracting the driver
- Eating while driving
- Doing hair, makeup, or other personal care tasks

Tips to be an engaged driver:

- Enable “do not disturb” mode on your phone while driving
- Set up your music, GPS navigation, and climate control before you start driving
- Stop to eat or save it until you reach your destination
- Save the personal care tasks for when you arrive at your destination, or do them before you leave

Visit shift-idaho.org/engaged-driving for more information.

The Idaho Transportation Department is responsible for an integrated network of more than 12,000 lane miles and more than 1,800 bridges and is committed to serving all Idahoans by enhancing quality of life through transportation. Learn more at itd.idaho.gov.

